

*Amtrak owns the East River tunnels used by LIRR trains; 2 out of 4 still severely limited with no timetable as to when they'll be fixed*

Hicksville, NY – Today, Rep. Steve Israel (D – Huntington) and Long Island Railroad (LIRR) Commuter Council Chair Mark Epstein called on Amtrak to be more transparent when it comes to a timetable and updates on East River tunnel repairs. LIRR trains utilize four tunnels to cross under the East River into Manhattan. These tunnels are owned by Amtrak, and since superstorm Sandy, two out of the four tunnels have been severely limited. As a result, LIRR commuters have been saddled with significant train delays.

Rep. Israel said, “It is unacceptable for Amtrak to withhold information from LIRR riders, many of whom depend on the system on a daily basis. While needed repairs after Sandy are understandable, riders should be kept abreast of the progress and be able to plan in advance for delays.”

Commuter Council Chairman Mark Epstein said, “Long Island Rail Road Riders are tired of being kept in the dark by Amtrak when it comes to the East River tunnels. Amtrak, as a publicly chartered entity, owes transparency to the public especially those who use its facilities.”

Amtrak is a for-profit corporation, but was created by Congress in 1970 and is provided support and federal funding from the Federal Railroad Administration. The East River tunnels Amtrak owns are the only non-LIRR-owned track in the LIRR system.

This morning, Rep. Israel spoke with Amtrak president, Joseph Boardman, and was assured that the tunnels would be repaired by Christmas week.